

Michal Zezula: Selected issues in the High Medieval transformation of the Moravian-Silesian border region (evidence from archeological sources)

This study consists of three chapters and focuses on the Moravian-Silesian border region and its transformation during the High Middle Ages (in the 13th century). For most of the Early Middle Ages, this region lay on the boundary between the early Bohemian and Polish states, and after being annexed to the Přemyslid territories at the end of the 12th century it underwent fundamental changes, which are symbolized by the early emergence of institutionalized towns within the Bohemian Lands. The first chapter focuses on the Golensizi region in the Early Middle Ages, particularly on the village of Holasovice, which has attracted the attention of archeologists and historical researchers for over two centuries. Based on an assessment of older and more recent archeological discoveries and surveys, the significance of the location during the second half of the 12th century and the first half of the 13th century has been determined. Although there is at present no relevant archeological information which would provide evidence of the role played by Holasovice in the structures of the Piast state, its status as a local-level administrative centre in the Přemyslid-controlled province is revealed by the presence of a wooden sacred building, an Early Gothic church and an administrative centre for an estate belonging to the provincial lords. The town of Opava (Troppau), founded between 1213 and 1220 at the site of an existing precursor settlement, became the economic centre of the province. Documentary and archeological sources reveal that the town grew rapidly during the 13th century, especially from around the 1230s onwards, when its layout became stabilized, fortifications were built, and important sacred buildings were also constructed (including mendicant monasteries). The second chapter presents the results of archeological research with relevance to individual aspects of the development of the urban entity and the material culture of its inhabitants. Particular attention is paid to the production of pottery items, whose changing forms reflect changing economic and social circumstances during the period under investigation. The third chapter thus focuses more closely on a pottery kiln discovered in Velké Heraltice, which is connected with the final phase of the local Early Medieval tradition of pottery production – by which time the pottery may already have been to some extent influenced by new, imported models.

Town, village, 12th and 13th century, settlement – Moravian-Silesian border region, High Medieval transformation, pottery production